



Tamara GRIGSBY

Wisconsin State Representative
18th Assembly District

Testimony Before the Assembly Committee on Transportation February 21, 2008 Assembly Bill 818

I want to thank Chairperson Petrowski for his leadership in offering Assembly Bill 818 and for scheduling a hearing so quickly on this bill. I'd also like to thank Committee members Hahn and Vruwink for cosponsoring this bill.

One of the most important variables in getting and keeping a job is having a driver's license. Many jobs are located in areas that are either not served by public transportation at all, or are very difficult to get to relying solely on public transportation. For individual's who have lost their driving privileges, it is imperative that their license be reinstated as quickly as possible after having served their suspension time and the payment of their fines.

This bill takes makes several changes to the statutes relating to the timing of driver license suspension. In short it:

- Eliminates all statutory provisions for suspensions to begin after application. Suspensions would begin with the date of eligibility for a license instead.
- Makes the revocation for a 4th operating after suspension or operating after revocation discretionary with the courts, rather than mandatory. This provision was included in the Governor's budget bill but didn't make it into the final budget that was passed.
- Eliminates the requirement that courts, law enforcement, and DOT physically take away driver's licenses under certain circumstances.
- Allows for automatic reinstatement of a driver's license after revocation and payment for reinstatement.

This bill will streamline the reinstatement process for the Department of Transportation, allow drivers to become legally licensed in a more expedient manner. It takes into account the modernization of driver license data and takes additional burdens off the motoring public for reinstating their licenses.

I thank the committee for your time and consideration of this matter. I am happy to answer any questions Committee members may have.

Milwaukee POLICE Association®

Local #21 IUPA-AFL-CIO



OFFICE: 6310 WEST BLUEMOUND ROAD, MILWAUKEE, WI 53213
PHONE: (414) 778-0740 • FAX: (414) 778-0757 • e-mail: police@execpc.com
www.milwaukeekeepoliceassoc.com

John A. Balcerzak
President

Thomas E. Fischer
Vice-President

Mark A. Sikora
Secretary/Treasurer

John T. Belsha
Troy K. Jankowski

Trustees:
Mark D. Buetow
Christopher A. Moews

Daniel J. Halbur
Sebastian C.J. Raclaw

Office Secretaries: Debra Schneider, Candy Johnson

February 21, 2008

Representative Jerry Petrowski
Committee on Transportation
Room 11 North
State Capitol
PO Box 8953
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Representative Petrowski:

On behalf of the approximately 1700 law enforcement officers in the Milwaukee Police Association (MPA) please accept this correspondence as support for LRB 3225 which makes several changes in statutes relating to suspension times of driver licenses.

In the County of Milwaukee there are approximately 90,000 people that have either revoked or suspended driver licenses (DL). The lack of people able to obtain a valid license is the main problem from keeping people in our community from obtaining a job.

The MPA believes that judges throughout the State of Wisconsin should have the discretion as to what the time limit of a suspended license should be, and if the license suspension should be consecutive or concurrent. We believe that when a license is suspended, the DL should not be physically taken away from that person. It would be easier for law enforcement officers to have a DL from that person in order to identify the driver of that vehicle. We also believe that when a person is eligible for reinstatement of their license, and they pay their reinstatement fee, they would be able to obtain their license without going to a DOT office. This would make it easier for a person to operate a motor vehicle within the law and stop the revolving door system that goes on currently.

Representative Jerry Petrowski

February 21, 2008

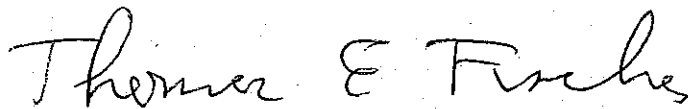
Page 2

The DOT suspends DLs for many reasons. In the State of Wisconsin judges both in the Circuit Courts and the Municipal Courts can suspend and revoke a driver's license for offenses that have nothing to do with driving. Beside people losing their license for a drug conviction, they can lose it for failure to pay a municipal fine or even for skipping out of school.

The MPA understands that the key for people to get and maintain a job is to have a license to drive. The current system is just a revolving door for a person who has their DL suspended or revoked. Upon examining available statistics obtained from the DOT, it is apparent that this problem is occurring throughout the entire State of Wisconsin, and in particular in Milwaukee. The MPA believes that this bill is one step to break that cycle of the revolving door for people that have suspended or revoked driver licenses.

Sincerely,

MILWAUKEE POLICE ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas E. Fischer".

Thomas E. Fischer
Vice President
Local #21, IUPA, AFL-CIO

TEF/cmj



DISTRICT ATTORNEY DANE COUNTY



BRIAN W. BLANCHARD
District Attorney

JUDY SCHWAEMLE
Deputy District Attorney
Felony Unit

MICHAEL S. WALSH
Deputy District Attorney
Juvenile Unit

TIMOTHY R. VERHOFF
Deputy District Attorney
Criminal Traffic &
Misdemeanor Unit

SUZANNE BEALDOIN
Manager
Victim / Witness Unit

NANCY GUSTAF
Manager
Deferred Prosecution Unit

MARLYS HOWE
Manager
Domestic Violence Unit

KATHY McDERMOTT
Administrative Services
Supervisor

VIA FACSIMILE & MAIL

February 20, 2008

Rep. Jerry Petrowski, Chair
Assembly Committee on Transportation
Wisconsin State Capitol
PO Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

Re: Assembly Bill 818

Dear Representative Petrowski,

I write in support of Assembly Bill 818, now scheduled for a public hearing before the Transportation Committee tomorrow. Responsibilities in the courthouse prevent me from appearing in person, but I thank you for considering these thoughts.

The public justifiably expects police and prosecutors to prioritize cases every day, and to seek penalties that reasonably fit conduct that can be proven in court. As part of those goals, the laws need to distinguish to the greatest degree possible between drivers in court who have been caught operating vehicles dangerously and those who have not. The circuit courts should not be clogged with revocation cases for persons who do not appear to be dangerous drivers.

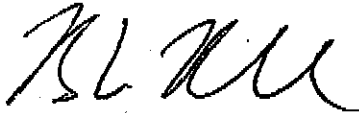
AB 818 takes the positive step of dropping the mandatory revocation of a license upon a fourth conviction for operating after suspension, allowing revocation at the discretion of the judge. Operating after suspension cases for non-dangerous drivers could remain in municipal courts, and free up circuit court time for drunk driving, reckless driving, and other serious traffic cases, not to mention the child abuse, sexual assault, and other critical cases that occupy the time of the circuit courts. Dangerous drivers would continue to be revoked and continue to be prosecuted in circuit courts.

In addition, a University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee study in 2006 appears to have established that having a valid driver's license correlates more strongly with sustained employment than even a GED. Revoking persons who are not unsafe drivers undermines the labor force, and needlessly keeps citizens from providing for themselves and their children.

Rep. Jerry Petrowski
February 20, 2008
Page 2

Thank you for considering these views, and I would be happy to respond to any questions or concerns any member of your committee might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'B. Blanchard', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Brian W. Blanchard

cc: Deputy DA Timothy R. Verhoff
Chief Judge William Foust
Court Commissioner Todd Meurer